

Windham County Reformer

THE VERMONT PRINTING CO., Publishers

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What Better Have We to Offer?

It is unfortunate for the people of Vermont, a majority of whom, including many sheriffs and other officials, object to the execution (except in theory) of the death penalty upon a criminal, that another case has occurred within the commonwealth in which no satisfactory way out of a hanging can be found.

It has generally happened, in Vermont murder cases, that some testimony or technicality has appeared affording legal means of evading the infliction of the penalty so obnoxious to public sentiment, and such means have always been eagerly seized upon. The case of Mrs. Rogers is no exception to this custom. Although her guilt is fully established and although no just reason can be found why, under the law, she should not hang, the best legal talent of the state has diligently employed itself in her behalf even to the extent of arraigning the judgment and discretion of our highest courts, state officials and laws.

On this arraignment the United States supreme court is now appealed to. Mrs. Rogers has had every chance under the law, but no mitigation of her sentence seemed justifiable. Justice Peckham of the United States supreme court said emphatically to her counsel, "The action of the state appellate court in passing on the question of newly discovered evidence is due process of law. It covers her rights."

If the state of Vermont really believes in the justice and beneficence of the death penalty for murderers, its conscience need not suffer in the case of Mrs. Rogers even if, as seems unavoidable, she is finally executed upon the gallows. It will simply do its duty, after long and careful consideration of the testimony offered, it has given her every opportunity she has asked for to establish her claims for further hearing. No such claims could be established. If punishment is now averted it will be by means of legal tricks and technicalities or by executive weakness unworthy of the commonwealth.

But if the state does not believe in the beneficence and justice of the death penalty for actual application, regarding it merely as a deterrent threat whose fulfillment may be easily evaded by the employment of legal or medical jugglery, then this crucial experience of choice between the sacrifice of a human life and the honor of the state will mean an end to capital punishment in Vermont, either as farce or tragedy.

But if we abolish the death penalty as inhuman what are we substituting? Are we giving our criminals whom we confine in our state's prison, the "chance" their friends clamor for, to reform? Reports of prison life in Vermont are indicating somewhat lower depths of physical, mental and moral depravity within the prison walls than would be likely to be reached outside. Capital punishment may be cruel, but to shut a human soul unescapably in with dishonesty, bribery, immorality and debauchery, is fiendish. Death ends a career of wickedness; if life imprisonment does not do this, it is hardly preferable, from any point of view.

Before we take any action toward abolishing the death penalty, which is occasionally enforced, we must see to it that we have something more humane to offer—life, which, while restrained, solitary, perhaps, and unpleasant, is still clean, useful and in the possible growth of the human soul toward its Maker, not hopeless of joy.

Veracity not the First Question.

In a letter to the Burlington Free Press Monday, Anna Batchelder, the Boston Journal reporter who interviewed Mrs. Rogers in her cell at the state's prison at Windsor on the day of the last reprieve, denies that she obtained any "pull" in the affair from her brother, State's Attorney Charles Batchelder. She says she never spoke of the project to him and did not know that he was in Windsor that day until she met him in the prison. She says that Superintendent Wilson S. Lovell gave her permission to see Mrs. Rogers after she had fully explained to him and to Sheriff Peck just what she wanted and why she wanted it. She declares that both these officials knew that she was a newspaper reporter when she asked the permission.

The St. Albans Messenger, in quoting Miss Batchelder's letter, insists that Superintendent Lovell positively denied to its representative that he knew the woman was a reporter for any newspaper when he admitted her and distinctly said that the reason for her admission was that she was the sister of the state's attorney who went into the cell with her. The Messenger also claims authority for the statement that this was the official explanation of the occurrence made by Superintendent Lovell to Governor Bell. Since the publication of Miss Batchelder's letter and after reading it, the superintendent is reported to have emphatically reiterated his former assertion.

Falsehood somewhere is apparent in these conflicting statements, but the question of veracity is not the most important involved. Whatever the truth may be, Superintendent Lovell is not justified in admitting a visitor

to the cell of a condemned murderer for no other reason than that of relationship to a state official. It is his duty to know the object of the visitor and to admit no one whose mission is not legitimate and proper. Mere curiosity or interest should not constitute a sufficient claim for admission, either.

Superintendent Lovell should be held responsible for a flagrant breach of official duty, whether he knew or did not know that the woman was a reporter. If he has not backbone enough to say no to the "sisters and the cousins and the aunts" of his brother officials, he is not the right kind of a man to superintend the state's prison.

It appears that Jay Wasn't Caught very fast.

The white dove of peace still hovers over the far East; but, like Darius Green of flying machine fame, she seems to like flying better than lighting.

There seems to have been no necessity for bringing Mary Rogers down to Brattleboro for the hearing before Judge Wheeler Wednesday except that we might in future be able to say that Mrs. Rogers once visited Brattleboro.

Loose locks and laws make very comfortable circumstances for criminals. It's a humane age—but nourishing vipers is dangerous kindness. Our prison and other state officials should remember that the outside public has some claim to consideration.

Sir William Broadbent has publicly expressed his belief that alcoholic excess is the greatest and most potent of the principal factors in the progress of consumption. Here is an argument—self safety—that will appeal more strongly to the slave of alcohol than any claim of affection, friendship or honor.

"Who shall say," said Justice Brewer to the Vassar college girls, in his recent Phi Beta Kappa address, "that before gray hair shall cover the heads of the women here to-day," a woman may not sit in the White House? At the present rate of effort no one will dare say this may not happen if any woman at that time remains outside a sanitarium. The pace is rapid.

Admiral Clark might well have refused, during the last session of the legislature, to allow his portrait to be hung on the state house walls unless the capital punishment law were removed from the state statute books. But if he now insists that the state shall disregard a law made by representatives of her citizens and endorsed by them again and again, it would be better to remove his portrait, altogether, from the walls of the capitol. Vermont can do without portraits on the state house walls, but not without her self respect and the maintenance of her laws.

Sheriff Peck may have exhibited a very human quality in his determination to get even with the newspapers which have criticized him by excluding all reporters from the execution of Mrs. Rogers, but he did not show a high conception of the dignity of his office or of the duty he owes the state. Withholding from the people of the state an honest report of the enforcement of a state law is as far short of a faithful discharge of his duty toward the state as his aid to an outside paper in obtaining a nauseating scoop of yellow journalism exceeded it. Have we no large-minded men for our state officers? Or must the business of the state continue to be used as a salve for wounded official vanity?

The people of Randolph village recently received a disagreeable sensation from the sight of two diseased cattle which passed through that place in a cattle train en route for Boston. A citizen is said to have declared on the spot that something should be done to prevent such animals from being sent to Boston to be used for meat. Unless a citizen purpose to follow up a consignment of diseased livestock and see what is done with it, he might as well give shipper and receiver the benefit of the doubt. Cattle shipped to Boston are not necessarily used for meat and competent inspection is supposed to settle the question of what shall be done with them. They must be disposed of in some way, if only for their horns and hides and as refuse.

Mr. Bryan's Commoner states that the reports received from correspondents show a systematic effort on the part of the railroads to coerce country editors into either keeping silence or opposing legislation on railroad rates. The Commoner's comment is that not all such editors will be coerced. They certainly will not. It is reasonable to suppose that coercion of the country press by the railroads would prove a most difficult, not to say perilous, undertaking. If any coercion has been attempted in New England it has escaped our notice. The country press will be found almost unanimously in support of legislation that seems to offer a practical solution of the railroad rate question. If the rural editors are not shouting about it as loudly as the Commoner and the Metropolitan press, it is because they realize that running a railroad is somewhat different from running a newspaper. All good citizens will support the government in any rational measures looking toward relief from the unfair discrimination of any corporation. On the other hand they mostly recognize the difficulties of the situation and desire nothing that can permanently injure the great transportation interests of the country.

The state board of health issues another warning letter to the people of Vermont this year in regard to the danger attending the use of explosives in celebrating the Fourth of July. It calls attention to the serious injury often done the sick and feeble and notes that while the deaths from tetanus in the country last year were reduced by seventy-five per cent owing to public information regarding this class of injuries, deaths from other explosives than blank cartridges were increased fifty per cent. The board joins with the state press in urging a reform in the celebration of Independence day and suggests a program which shall do away with firecrackers, dangerous fireworks, the careless firing of cannon and other firearms, which caused the increase in mortality last year. It also urges prompt and careful attention to all wounds, however trivial, from blank cartridges. Recalling the independence day record of injury and death throughout the state last year, the need of the board's warning is apparent. Patriotic enthusiasm need not be checked, but it should be guided. Patriotism sometimes courts danger, but only when the nation's welfare or safety is sought. To court danger or death merely for the sake of noise and excitement is imbecility.

MATTERS OF OPINION.

Selected from the Editorial Columns of Our Esteemed Contemporaries.

Right.

[Brooklyn Eagle.] The state of Vermont is able to dispose of its own criminals without influence or interference from Connecticut or New York. It has executed justice without vengeance in the past and there is not the slightest ground to suspect the justice or fairness of this decision (in the case of Mrs. Rogers).

School Trips to Washington.

[New Bedford Evening Standard.] The senior class of the Bellows Falls high school recently made a trip to Washington in lieu of the usual class-day exercises. Something may be said for the innovation, and something may probably be said against it. Much depends on the way in which the boys and girls saw the capital city of the United States. No doubt it would be a fine thing if every high school graduate in this country could make a trip to Washington to see the seat of government, but whether that would always be a satisfactory substitute for the class day is at least an open question. We are among the firm believers in the theory that no amount of this sort of thing, no Washington at least once in his life, and that at some sacrifice in other directions; and if one visit could be made at that period when the youth could receive his impressions free from the bias of the school, no doubt it would be immensely to his advantage. As a part of an education the visit would be, when well directed, of exceeding value and in most cases a better substitute for the class day. It is not practicable, of course, to include such education within the limits of that which is paid for by the community; but it is a good thing for parents to understand what their children are doing, and to open up a field of useful expenditure by millions who are aiming to die poor.

Without the Governor's Field.

[Hartford, Conn., Times.] Inter-state comity is a very good thing, but it should not be allowed to interfere in the internal affairs of another state (in the Island license) is a different matter, and rests on a conception of justice which will become dangerous if it should be abandoned. It is not surprising to hear that the people of Hinsdale feel that their rights are in peril, and that without any immediate reference to the nature of the case in hand, but because they understand what this outside interference in state affairs may lead to. Objection is also, and very properly, made to the attempt to have the governor interfere. In what is wholly the responsibility of the commonwealth.

A Defense of Mr. Edmunds.

[Burlington News.] Ex-Senator Edmunds did not leave Vermont because it became too small to hold him, but on account of the firm health of his wife and daughter, which absolutely required a change of climate. As to "proper" interest in the commonwealth, no doubt Mr. Edmunds would display it, should it ever become necessary. In a practical way he showed an "interest" in the commonwealth which we should call decidedly "proper," by making a gift of land equivalent to a donation of \$40,000 or \$50,000 in money to the Burlington high school. And Edmunds is not regarded as a rich man. In this beneficence we believe that Mr. Edmunds showed his interest in his old home to far better advantage than by eternally boasting and bragging and belittling about Vermont.

Room for Genuine.

[Boston Record.] It may be an insult to offer coal to Newcastle, but it is no longer a casual bell to send pure maple syrup for sale in Vermont since the latter's state board of health has found adulteration in 12 per cent of the Vermont pure maple syrups prepared for the New England market.

'Ware the Evil Speaker!

[Montpelier Journal.] Every town has a few "knockers" whose words are sometimes mistaken for public opinion. Look out for a man who speaks ill of his own town. The chances are that it is his fault and not that of the town.

Better Take Heed, Farmers.

[Lyndonville Journal.] Forestry plantations here in Vermont are better requests to leave to your children than stocks in rubber companies in Mexico. Russell Conwell's "Acres of Diamonds" are nearer home than some of us realize.

Clement's Candidacy and the Issue.

[Rutland News.] This seems to indicate that Percival W. Clement of this city would be a candidate for governor of Vermont, and that his platform would be mismanagement in public institutions. His paper, the Rutland Herald, in speaking of Mr. Clement's case against the state auditor of accounts to compel him to open his books and accounts for his inspection, says "This issue is now before the state supreme court. Eventually it will be before the voters of the state." This seems to be a pretty plain announcement of the candidacy and the issue.

Advertising That Doesn't Pay.

[St. Albans Messenger.] Some of the makers of adulterated food products now being sold in Vermont are being gratuitously advertised by the state board of health and the state press, but it is a kind of advertising that will not be found to pay them. The press of Vermont can do the public no greater service than to herald the state board of adulteration and impurity far and wide, giving names and details so that the unworthy goods may be easily identified and refused by everybody. This is one

THE MEDDLER.

"If the coat fits you put it on."

The State Commissioners' Business.

[Boston Journal.] We are compelled to side with the Hinsdales in this contest (the Island license). They should have an undoubted right to place their saloons where they please within their own boundaries, and if Vermonters feel bound to come over and get drunk, that is no affair of theirs. Brattleboro can close up its end of the bridge, if it feels so strongly on the subject, and compel its bibulous residents to take to row-boats or swim for their "pizen." Anyway, we do not see how it becomes the business of Governor Bell of Vermont to write an official letter to Governor McLane of New Hampshire about the case, urging him to interfere and "protect Brattleboro."

By Practice, Rather than Precept.

[Rutland News.] It is not pleasing by any means to note the long docket before some of the June terms of county courts in the state. It is not pleasing, for instance, on the Windsor county docket, to say nothing of 43 divorce suits beside! The criminal list is one of nearly all crimes in the category. It is a sad state of affairs, and we must have more effective missionary effort among the heathen at our very doors.

Good Work at the Foundation.

[Rutland Herald.] We recently remarked in reference to President Eliot's recent plea for teaching art in public schools: "We are under the impression that our schools do well enough when they ground their pupils in the rudiments of education. The cultivation of taste for beautiful things is not the function of a teacher in our public schools. It is well enough for a public school to say fine things about symmetry and beauty, but the most beautiful thing we know of in a pupil of our public schools is a knowledge of reading, writing and arithmetic." We are well-schooled. We are decidedly of the opinion that President Eliot is "ahead of the game."

This leads the Bellows Falls Times to say: "There is no excuse for a high school to wash from the edge of the dam near Main street bridge one cake, one cheese box, a pall, several remnants of banana bunches and all of them, all of which had been making a terrible and conspicuous mess on the sidewalk for several weeks and giving visitors a bad impression of the cleanliness of Brattleboro. There ought to be some way of keeping refuse out of the brook instead of waiting for high water to clean it out. The Meddler has made remarks on this before and intends to do so again if the occasion requires. Why couldn't the balliffs and police keep the 'front door' of the town as attractive as possible?"

The glamor of circus life is certainly lacking when weather conditions prevail like those under which Robinson's show visited Brattleboro. From the time the first circus train reached town early Wednesday morning until the last car was loaded shortly before midnight rain fell in torrents, yet the work had to proceed with the same speed and precision as if there had been no cloud in the sky. If any youngster felt like running away with the show under such conditions he ought to have been allowed to go for the charms of a circus-man's life could never be any less than that were here.

Fair, but Painful.

The St. Albans Messenger says: The question of the case of United States district attorney, now held by the Hon. James L. Martin of Brattleboro, should be put again at the disposal of the president when the present incumbent's term of office is completed, is fair enough and perfectly consistent with the policy already instituted in the case of the two collectors of customs. If thoroughly competent and trustworthy public servants like the Hon. Zephaniah M. Mansur of Newport and the Hon. Olin Merrill of Enosburg Falls are to step down and out this fall because the president has decided that fair play must give somebody else a chance at the political plums, then it is no more than right that the Hon. James L. Martin also should be succeeded in due course by some deserving republican.

The fifth annual meeting of the Vermont Funeral Directors and Embalmers' association will be held at Bellows Falls June 28, 29 and 30. A. J. Croto of Sudbury, 67, drove in front of a train at Brandon Friday, June 16, and was instantly killed. Croto was a contractor and builder. He had been ill for some time and is supposed to have committed suicide.

The fifty-fourth annual conference of the Evangelical Second Advent churches of Quebec and Vermont convened with the church at Montgomery Wednesday, June 14. The annual sermon was given by Rev. J. M. Orrock.

The new first-class battleship Vermont will be launched at Quincy, Mass., August 31. Governor Bell has been notified and asked by the builders to name a sponsor. The contract for the Vermont was signed June 1, 1902, to be completed December 29, 1906. It is 450 feet long and is to have a speed of 18 knots. The cost complete will be \$7,000,000.

Arthur Raymond, 55, of Marshfield attempted suicide Sunday, June 18, by shooting himself in the head with a 38-caliber revolver. Family troubles incited the act. Raymond has always been a good citizen. He is not expected to recover. His family consists of a wife, child and step-children.

The Masonic temple, owned by the Masonic grand lodge of Vermont, was placed on the list of taxable property at a meeting of the board of civil authority at Burlington. The meeting was marked by heated discussion. The grand lodge was represented at the meeting by H. F. Peck, who argued that the order was a charitable one and that the property could not be legally taxed.

Mrs. Maria Judd, wife of Adam Judd of Swanton, was drowned by falling off the dock at the fish hatchery while trying to get her pet dog out of the water Sunday, June 18. The river was considerably high and the current carried the body down stream several rods. It was recovered by her husband after it had been in the water about 20 minutes. Mrs. Judd was about 65 years of age.

The most important item of the recent Grand lodge Masonic session at Burlington was the introduction of a resolution looking toward the establishment of a Masonic home. The resolution provides that the grand lodge officers, together with all the past masters of the grand lodge, who live in the state constitute a committee to look into the matter of expense, location, etc., and report at the next annual meeting of the grand lodge.

J. W. Lebedell of Barre has made application for a patent that if granted, promises to revolutionize present methods of filtration as applied to water used for domestic purposes. The system employed comprises a series of fine screens or filters with an entirely new method to destroy all pathogenic bacteria in water flowing through it. The cost of installing it will be only about half that now charged by other manufacturers.

THE MEDDLER.

"If the coat fits you put it on."

A representative of a Boston Journal, which has a reputation for being somewhat "yellow," found himself before the United States district court yesterday on the charge of contempt because he snapped a picture of Judge Wheeler while the latter was on his way to the court room. After explaining to the prisoner that he had no right to take a photograph of anyone without permission, Judge Wheeler continued the case, putting the camera man under bail and releasing him on his own surety after he had exposed to the light six plates supposed to be objectionable. Of course The Meddler would not say it positively, but it would not surprise him at all if the actual negative which caused the action is now in a Boston newspaper office.

Brattleboro came in close touch with the now famous Rogers case Wednesday when Mary herself was brought here to appear before Judge Wheeler at a hearing on a writ of habeas corpus. Although it was known in the morning that the hearing would take place here, hardly a person in town was aware that Mrs. Rogers' hand would come to Brattleboro; indeed the court officers themselves were not apprised of the fact until shortly before the hour set for the hearing. After her arrival in town it took but a few moments for the news to spread, and when the time came for her departure for Windsor the station platform was lined with curiosity-devoured people. And the sight was nothing wonderful in itself; simply a young and fairly good looking woman, quietly dressed in black and apparently sound in mind and body. No one would think from a look at her face that she looked out of her place in the last six months of that time in solitary confinement.

Aside from the good to the crops the rain of Monday and Tuesday did another noteworthy thing. It raised the water in Whetstone brook sufficiently to wash from the edge of the dam near Main street bridge one cake, one cheese box, a pall, several remnants of banana bunches and all of them, all of which had been making a terrible and conspicuous mess on the sidewalk for several weeks and giving visitors a bad impression of the cleanliness of Brattleboro. There ought to be some way of keeping refuse out of the brook instead of waiting for high water to clean it out. The Meddler has made remarks on this before and intends to do so again if the occasion requires. Why couldn't the balliffs and police keep the 'front door' of the town as attractive as possible?"

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Huge Task.

It was a huge task, to undertake the cure of such a bad case of kidney disease, as that of C. F. Collier, of Cherokee, Ia., but Electric Bitters did it. The writer: "My kidneys were so far gone, I could not sit on a chair without a cushion; and suffered from dreadful backache, headache, and depression. In Electric Bitters, however, I found a cure, and by them was restored to perfect health. I recommend this great tonic medicine to all with weak kidneys, liver or stomach. Guaranteed by F. H. Holden & Co., druggists; price 50c."

Hiram Cronk's Patriotism.

A resident of Ava, N. Y., was talking about the late Hiram Cronk, the last survivor of the war of 1812. "At the age of 100," said the Ava man, "Mr. Cronk still had an alert mind. Above all things he was a patriot."

"An English traveller, out of curiosity, came to Ava to see Cronk one day. The old patriot praised America extravagantly and condemned England. 'The Englishman stood this talk as long as he could. Then he said hotly: "Suppose our superb fleet were to land 25,000 British marines in New York—what would you Yanks do then?"

"Do," said Cronk. "Why, dern it, our police would arrest them."—New Orleans States.

Did Not Break Them.

A well-known physician of Brooklyn tells an amusing incident that happened at his summer home in New Hampshire when his daughter, who is now a leading society belle, was a very small girl.

Her grandmother asked her to bring an egg from the henry. After several minutes the little girl returned with her apron full of eggs. While yet a distance away the grandmother asked, "Well, did you break any eggs on the way?"

"No, grandma," was the prompt reply; "but the shells came off a few."—New York Times.

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Brattleboro People Are Pleased to Learn How it is Done.

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Alvin H. Wilder, mason on Guilford road, three miles from Brattleboro, says: "For four or five years at intervals I knew I had either weakened or over-excited kidneys. As my employment requires a great deal of stooping and considerable lifting and a weak and aching back is not a desirable companion many a time after a hard day's work I have been so stiff and sore that I could scarcely move. I have more than once thought of giving up work, particularly after the contraction of a cold which was sure to settle in the loins causing extra aggravation and sometimes trouble with the kidney secretions. A friend advised me to use Doan's Kidney Pills and I went to George E. Greene's drug store for a box. If it had not helped me, I can guarantee, until I used four more. At the present time I consider myself cured."

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DR. C. S. CLARK. Dentist, Whitney block, Brattleboro. Telephone.

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J. EDGAR MELLENDY. PROBATE NOTICES

The charge for probate notices of the usual length in the REFORMER for the three weeks required by law is \$2.00. This includes publication of notices, Will Notices and Settlement Notices. We shall be glad to have direct the Register of Probate to send your notices to this office.

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